

I HAVE AN IDEA AND I NEED LAND.....



KNOW YOUR LIMITS. CHECK WHAT ZONE THE PROPERTY FALLS IN.

You will find the City of Albany's Zoning Ordinance at:
<https://ecode360.com/documents/AL0934/source/eX-AL0934-1497472247239.pdf>

Need help understanding the Zoning requirements?
 Contact the City's Vacant Property Coordinator - 518-434-5250

If you feel strongly about a location that does not allow your use, you can appeal to the Zoning Board for a variance. This takes some time. The Zoning Board meets monthly, and there are documents you must submit prior to the meetings. If you do not have neighborhood support for your proposal, you may not receive your variance.

contact TAP for site planning services: (518) 274-3050



CHOOSE YOUR LOT

The Albany County Land Bank (ACLB) is the best source to buy vacant lots in Albany County.
<http://albanycountylandbank.org/>
 518-407-0309

The City of Albany map layers will show you zoning, neighborhood association contacts and other information to assist you in selecting your lot.
<https://albanyny.mapgeo.io/>

If you need to know who owns a lot that you like, contact the city assessor.
<https://www.albanyny.gov/Government/Departments/PlanningandDevelopment/BZA.aspx>
 Albany City Assesor: 518-434-5155

If you are interested in privately owned land, contact a real estate agent or lawyer to represent you.



GET THE LAY OF THE LAND

Understand your new neighborhood. Visit during different times of day. Observe the activities, the sun exposure, the storm water. Introduce yourself to neighbors and maybe attend a community meeting. If you have a permitting issue you will need them to support you.
<http://albanyny.mapgeo.io>

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HAVE A PLAN.

Measure the property and create a scale drawing of it. If the dimensions don't match up with the tax map ask adjacent owners if they have property information. Sketch the locations of your plantbeds, raised beds, rain barrels, compost, tool shed, etc. Be sure it is enough space to meet your business projections.

Tips:

If you are going to need site plan approval or a zoning variance, you may want to hire an architect, landscape architect or planner. City planning office may be able to make a recommendation.

TAP, AHF, SEIC



HAVE A BUDGET.

Whatever you plan to do with your lot, you will have expenses to pay. Estimate all the possible costs and be sure you have the money to make your plan into reality. You will have short-term and long-term costs. Don't take on more than you can support.



CALCULATE THE TAXES BY LEARNING THE ASSESSMENT.

If you are not purchasing from ACLB you may have to pay back taxes or liens owned by the seller, to the city, or others.

<https://www.albanyny.gov/Government/Departments/PlanningandDevelopment/BZA.aspx>

Albany City Assessor: (518) 434-5155



CALCULATE THE ANNUAL WASTE WATER DISPOSAL FEE.

There will be a water fee even if you do not have running water on the site

<http://www.albanyny.gov/Files/Rate%20Str%202012%209%2012.pdf>
City of Albany Water Board: 518-434-5316



PURCHASE YOUR LOT.

When you are sure of the costs and the return on your investment, schedule the closing. Be prepared for closing costs, such as state-mandated recording fees, as well as deed preparation. If you are not purchasing from ACLB you may wish to hire a lawyer and have a title search done

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HAVE A SCHEDULE.

Let the neighbors know your schedule for clean up, maintenance and construction work. It's frustrating to have a new owner take over a vacant lot and not know what is happening.



CLEAN IT UP. BUT TEST THE SOIL FOR HAZARDS FIRST!

Dig right in as soon as possible, but be careful! Every new owner, no matter the planned use, should test the soil for heavy metals, primarily lead. Broken glass and metals are common hazards too. Use good work gloves and hard-toed boots. Protect against ticks and insects.

Cornell Cooperative Extension: (518) 765-3500

<http://albany.cce.cornell.edu/agriculture/soils-climate/how-to-take-a-soil-sample>



TAKE IT AWAY.

Understand the regulations for disposal of debris and vegetation from the lot. You may need to schedule a dumpster. You may want to rent a chipper for small trees.



COVER IT UP.

If it's going to be a while before you get around to improving the lot, ground cover helps keep weeds from growing back. Some ground covers will help revitalize soil.



STAKE YOUR CLAIM.

Consider whether fencing is necessary. A fence may provide safety, but it may also be damaged by plowing.



DIG SAFE !!

ALWAYS contact Dig Safely New York before you excavate or dig. An inspector will come to the site and mark out and electrical or natural gas utility lines near your site. You do not want to accidentally discover these utilities on your lot. Most empty lots were once buildings with utility lines that may not have been properly terminated.

1-800-962-7962

<http://www.dps.ny.gov/W/PSCWeb.nsf/SN/DigSafely>

<http://www.digsafelynewyork.com>